

A NEW SPECIES OF *OPHIORRHIZA* L. (RUBIACEAE) FROM KERALA, INDIA¹

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(With six text-figures)

A new species of *Ophiorrhiza* L. viz. *O. shendurunii* is described and illustrated.

During recent floristic studies conducted along the southern Western Ghats, we collected specimens of an interesting species of *Ophiorrhiza* L. On critical study it was found to be a new species. Hence it is described and illustrated here.

Ophiorrhiza shendurunii sp. nov.
(Figs. 1-6)

Peraffinis *O. eriantha* Wt. a qua differt neris lateralia in folia pauca, inflorescentes pubescentes, bracta et bracteola glabra, corolla pubescentes ad super basim, papillata sursum inferiora et capsula pilosa.

Typus: INDIA: Kerala, Kollam dist., Pandimotta c 1180 m, 27.i.1995 Coll. E.S. Santhosh Kumar 23271 (HOLO. TBGT; ISO. MH, CALI, K).

Allied to *Ophiorrhiza eriantha* Wt. but differs in having fewer lateral nerves in the leaves, pubescent inflorescence, glabrous bracts and bracteoles, corolla hairy above the base and then papillate upwards within, and pilose capsules.

Undershrubs; stem erect, branched, terete and glabrous; internodes 7-10 cm long. Leaves 8-12 x 3-5 cm, ovate to elliptic lanceolate, membranous, glabrous, acuminate at the apex, attenuate at the base, with lateral nerves upto 10 pairs; petioles 1-3 cm long, glabrous; stipules interpetiolar, to c. 2 cm long, linear, broadened

at the base and entire; inflorescence terminal, corymbose of helicoid cymes; peduncles pubescent; pedicels 0.1-0.2 cm long, pubescent; bracts and bracteoles many, linear, glabrous. Calyx tube terete, pubescent, lobes 5, triangular, glabrous. Corolla white, tube 1.1-1.5 cm. long, funnel shaped, ribbed, on the outside along the middle of the petals, and ribs hairy, glabrous at the base, hairy below the middle, and then papillate upwards within, distinctly veined; lobes 5, c. 0.3 x 0.2 cm. Stamens 5, inserted on the corolla tube above the base; anthers oblong, glabrous, basifixed, introrse, and longitudinally dehiscent. Disc epigynous, glandular, of 2 large lobes. Ovary 2-loculed, ovules many on basal ascending placenta; style filiform, glabrous; stigma 2-lobed with linear-lanceolate lobes. Capsules 0.4-0.5 x 0.7-0.8 cm, obovoid, compressed, pilose, girt by calyx limb. Seeds minute, angled, reticulate.

Flowering and Fruiting: Throughout the year.

Habitat: Evergreen forest.

Etymology: The specific epithet *shendurunii* is after the renowned Wildlife Sanctuary Shenduruni, the type locality of the taxon.

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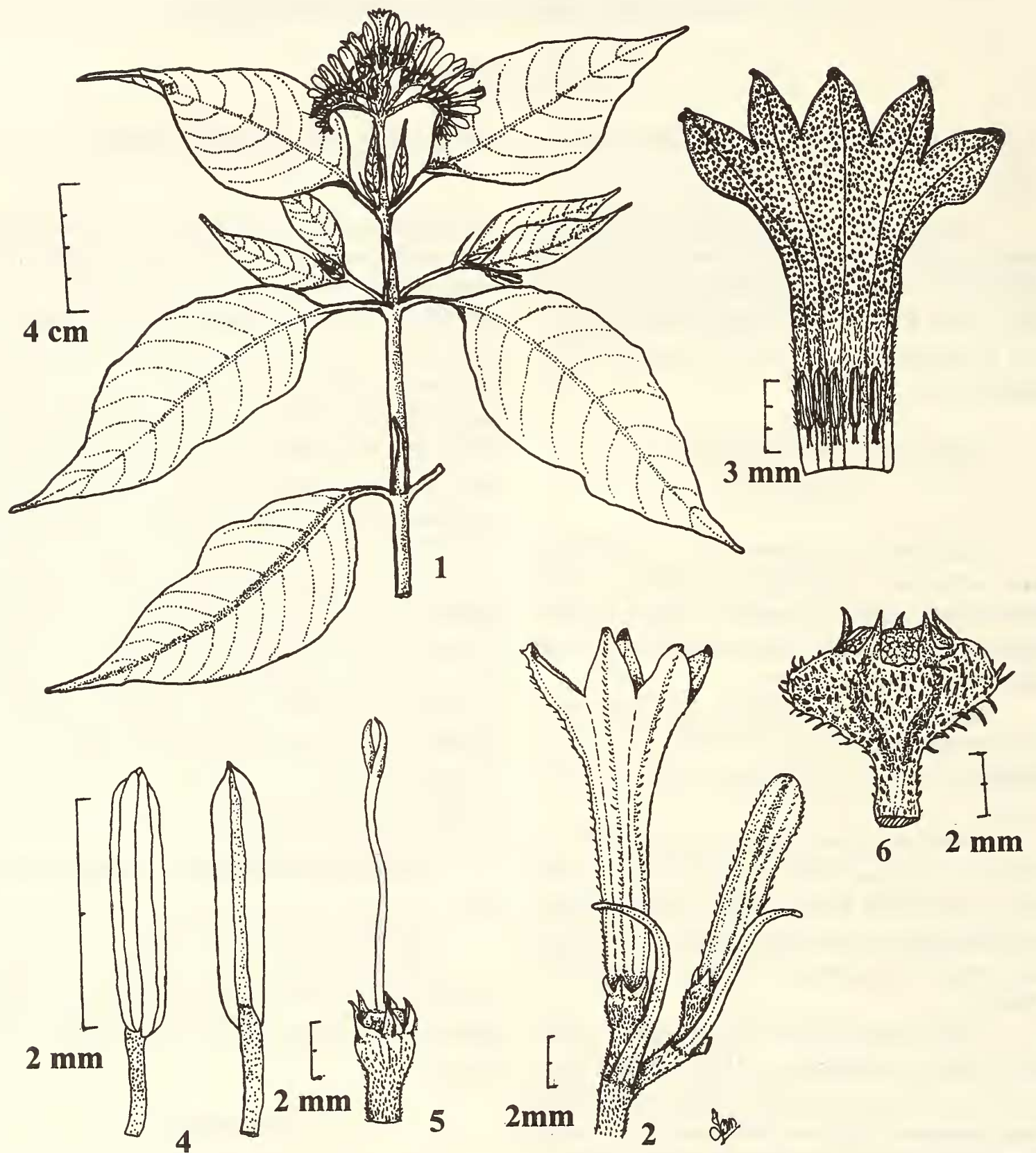


Fig. 1-6. *Ophiorrhiza shendurunii* sp. nov.

1. Habit; 2. A flower and flower bud; 3. Corolla exposed; 4. Stamens; 5. Gynaecium; 6. Capsule.